Prayer

A MEANS OF SPIRITUAL GROWTH

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Prayer, a Means of Spiritual Growth

BY

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"That ye might be filled with all the fulness of God."—Paul

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Preface

TOO OFTEN accretions take the place of growth. There are additions in outer form, instead of development of the inner life. In this way "the inner light fails." This process causes man's light to become darkness.

The purpose of this book is to encourage touch and communion with Him who is the light and the life of the world, to develop spiritual discernment and growth, peace and power, which are resultants of vital fellowship with the Son of God. To know Him as THE WAY is to frequent the avenue of prayer, and thus strengthen and beautify the soul by this holy exercise.

The quotations in this book from the Bible have been made at times from the King James' Version, and in certain instances from the Revised Version or a translation of my own. The purpose in this is to present as clearly as possible the spirit of the original.

N. E. C.

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PRAYER, A MEANS OF SPIRITUAL GROWTH

I

The Creature and Creator

"God created man in his own image." Genesis 1:27.

"Man became a living soul." Genesis 2:7.

GOD is the Creator and Father; man is the creature and son. "To us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him." The inter-relations are close, tender, and *mutual.* God, as Jehovah, is supreme and self-dependent. God, as Father, is compassionate, and recognizes human thought and action. So there is a mutual life.

In all of God's creation, man has a unique position and life. He has been crowned with glory and honor. To him dominion has been given over the works of God's hands. As in divine

revelation the Christocentric idea is seen, so in all creation the anthropocentric thought is vivid. All forms of created things are to be helpers in man's life, growth, and work. "Thou hast put all things under his feet. . . . O Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth!"

The creature, man, has an eminent nature; the God-image is his heritage. "This is the first note and attribute of human nature"; by this, man is distinguished from every other creature. In Adam the moral image was tarnished so that man is not at his best until by restoration this image is renewed. It is written in Colossians, "Put on the new man, which is renewed [or in the process of renewal] in knowledge after the image of him that created him." The spiritual knowledge of God is the object of restoration. To-day man sets forth in concrete form the splendid attributes of Deity as he grows up into the moral likeness of Christ.

The product portrays its producer. As the poem tells the attainment of the poet, so any creation speaks out the nature and ability of its maker. Thus man reveals the most superb creative thought of God. As in his soul the visions come of that fairer, fuller life, the more resplendent is he as such a revelator. A creature with such elements must have kindred conditions in which to live and grow. Therefore, "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth the soul after thee, O God."

The inventor has a lively interest in his invention. When his instrument is sent out he follows it to know of its work and success. He studies to make a better product by improvements. The more valuable the machine, the intenser his care and devotion. Thus there is a constant relation between his creation and him. In this case the relation is material, and, at its best, mental, but between man and God there is a vital bond. Then, as His creation,

the human race, in its heart cries out and pulsates for greater freedom and larger spheres, He will hear and feel, also, through His Son, work to improve His children and their conditions.

Natural theology becomes a broader and more helpful science as man by research finds God in nature. The elements of the divine so permeate the grasses, flowers, trees, all forms of vegetation, and are so engraven on sand, soil, and star, that the inspiration of heaven is in the air we breathe. This is but another evidence of our Father's nearness to us and love for us. It is the most lifeful incentive to commune with Him by holding conversation with nature. Bryant sings a great truth in these words:

"To him who in the love of nature holds
Communion with her visible forms, she speaks
A various language; for his gayer hours
She has a voice of gladness and a smile
And eloquence of beauty, and she glides
Into his darker musings with a mild
And healing sympathy that steals away
Their sharpness, ere he is aware. . . .
Go forth under the open sky, and list

To nature's teachings, while from all around—
Earth and her waters and the depths of air—
Comes a still voice."

This voice exclaims, "O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches."

Man is a creature capable of communion with God. He is encouraged to do this in the natural and written revelation of God's will and relations to man. The Creator stands also in the relation of friend. Just as Abraham yielded to God in spirit and was called "the friend of God," so is every member of the race privileged to enjoy this intimacy. Christ emphasizes this nearness by saying, "No longer do I call you servants; because the servant knoweth not what his master does: but I call you friends; for all things which I have heard from the side of my Father I made known unto you."

"To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion, and power, both now and ever."

II

Prayer, Natural and Reasonable

"Behold, he prayeth." Acts 9:11.

In our previous study, the intimate relationship between man and God was pointed out. Man's insufficiency, lack of strength and wisdom, is taught in the Word of God. Human experience and observation verify this teaching. The heart instinctively cries out to Him in whom is the inexhaustible treasure of power and wisdom. In many cases this source of help is not clearly defined in the human mind, yet, in times of failure and misfortune, there is a crying out to a Deliverer for aid.

The history of civilization records many crises in man's forward march. Different nations and divisions of the race have wrought in this complex work. Thus man has been seen under

countless conditions; in this way, his tendencies, practices, have been observed again and again. Observation confirms the statement that the prayer-cry is universal. "This is a result of the need of prayer by man to God." The very essence of his nature seeks rest and nurture by reaching out toward its origin.

"In Bible teaching, the fact of prayer is taken for granted, just as truly as the existence of God and the dependence of man on Him." In the first of the Hebrew Scriptures there are no injunctions to prayer, yet there are records of intense and effectual prayers. Perhaps there is no prayer in the entire Bible more filled with a deep spirit of intercession than that of Moses at the time of Aaron's making the calf for worship. Hear him: "O Lord, this people have sinned a great sin and have made them gods of gold. Yet now, if thou *wilt* forgive their sin—; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written."

Man has been created to pray. Just as it is natural for the spider to spin its web, the bee to collect the honey and place it in perfect cells, and the bird to sing, so it is innate for man to search after and commune with God. Especially is this manifest when he stands in the presence of the dread realities of the future. He has, at least, a vague consciousness of a Guide for such trials; a supply for such needs. This idea of "the God-given supply prompts the man-felt longing." So,

"What are men better than sheep or goats
That nourish a blind life within the brain,
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer,
Both for themselves and those who call them friend?"

The Bible enforces the teaching of God's fatherhood. This is emphatic as to man, yet He exercises tender care over all His creatures. "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.

Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows." "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him."

The prayer-cry which is natural and universal presents itself as reasonable. Indeed, it would be absurd to think of the instinctive and natural as being contrary to reason. To create man with this impulse and not to encourage its use by regard to his prayers would be like putting an instinct in the bird to build her nest, yet supply nothing with which to build. The fact of man's crying out urges the reasonableness of the process.

He who lives unnaturally lives unreasonably. It is unreasonable for a son to live without making requests of his father, for it is unnatural. Just as we expect the child to ask the father for what it wants, so we expect man to ask his Father, God. The father is sovereign in his home, and he has a plan of government, yet would any one declare it is unscientific for

him to grant a request of his child? Rev. R. J. Campbell, the successor of Dr. Joseph Parker, in a kindred study, presents these words of the Lord, "If ye [any of you who is a father] give, then how much more your heavenly Father from whom cometh every good and perfect gift."

God, in nature and the Bible, promises to do marvelous things. "He opens his hand and *satisfies* every living thing." Grant that He discerns the needs of every creature, yet it must be observed by the man given to research that "every living thing" is so created as to exercise itself for its highest life. Since it is in accord with what God has encouraged by promise, who would assume that prayer is unreasonable and unscientific?

Man has power over forces governed by "laws of nature." It seems weak, then, to contend that He who made these forces of nature, also man, and placed him as supreme over the things of His hands, has so arranged affairs

that to allow man his prerogative on given conditions would be to reverse certain laws and put a premium on chaos.

The Fifth Psalm is a splendid illustration of personal waiting upon God. Dr. Joseph Parker, commenting upon this, wrote: "Let us, then, gladly learn that one man will be heard. This idea does not degrade the majesty of heaven, but rather exalts it. Our vicious imagination is prone to think that the God of the universe can condescend to listen to nothing but the speech of the universe itself. The Bible finds it infinitely difficult to rid the human mind of this unworthy and debasing sophism. We must invert our ideas of greatness when we apply them to the Divine Being. We express our reverence most acceptably when we recognize God as numbering the hairs of our head, caring for the lilies of the field and the fowls of the air, carrying the lambs in His bosom, and condescending to men of low estate. Great-

ness is a question of quality, not of bulk."

Come, then, children of men, greatly rejoice that you are born to pray, and are heard and answered in prayer. O Lord, "Let all those that put their trust in thee rejoice: let them ever shout for joy, because thou defendest them."

"I will praise thee: for thou hast heard me, and art become my salvation."

III

Prayer, Its Content and Relations

"Lord, teach us to pray." Luke 11 : 1.

"We know not what we should pray for as we ought : but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." Romans 8 : 26, 27.

The study of a term often opens up new worlds of thought. As the horizon is extended blessed privileges and joys become ours. So in the study of the term, "prayer," its content, usage, and relations, a richer life may be encouraged and powers which are now potential may become actual.

The word used in Luke 11 : 1, translated "to pray," is the Greek term found in the Septuagint Version for a word of similar meaning in the Hebrew. This word, προσεύχομαι from Æschylus and Herodotus, everywhere is used of prayers to gods or God. This term and two others, ἐρωτάω and αἰτέομαι,

are vital with thought of prayer to God. Their associations make them yet more significant. Certain other verbs are used to set forth the idea of asking, seeking, and praying: A demand or a request of the will as found in John 14:13, "Whatsoever ye shall *ask* in my name," expressed by the verb αἰτήσητε, from αἰτέω, which means a request of the will. Then the terms ἐπιθυμέω, a desire prompted by the sensibilities, and δέομαι, the asking of need.

In I. Timothy 2:1, three nouns which are used express shades of meaning as to the scope of prayer. The usual translation is, "I exhort therefore, that, first of all, *supplications, prayers, intercessions,* and giving of thanks, be made for all men." The word "supplications" is from δεήσεις, which Professor Grimm says is petitionary in its content and may be used of a request to man as well as to God. The word "prayers" is from προσευχάς which, he says, "is a word of sacred character, being limited to prayer to

God." To these two words is added the term ἐντευξις, which is translated *intercession,* and "expresses confiding access to God." Thus, the first of these three words gives expression to *personal need,* the second sets forth the *element of devotion,* the third presents *childlike confidence,* "by representing prayer as the heart's converse with God."

This verse also emphasizes another element which associates itself with prayer; this is thanksgiving. As one writer expresses it, "Asking a favor from one who can give includes an obligation, and so a virtual promise to return thanks if the favor be granted. He who does not come to God in prayer, with praise for the privilege of praying, fails of showing a right estimate and appreciation of prayer."

From the foregoing, it is seen that the term includes asking, petitioning, supplicating, confession, adoration, thanksgiving, and *communion.* Too many have a narrow view of prayer.

It is often limited to asking God in time of need. Does a man act in this way toward his friend? Does he hold no conversation with him except in time of need? No. The relationship with his friend must be kept strong and vital, if he can count on him in emergencies. With God, man's friend, conversation must be frequent and genial, if conditions exist favorable to the receiving of aid when in distress. Then, devotion and childlike confidence should be the atmosphere of man's life. Such an attitude toward God, such an inbreathing, will instruct as to the relations and connections of true prayer.

The Bible associates prayer with affliction, pardon, the gaining of God's favor, the enjoying of the Holy Spirit, temporal and spiritual blessings, and the acquisition of wisdom.

On affliction: Psalm 7:1, "O Lord my Lord, in thee do I put my trust: save me from all them that persecute me, and deliver me." Psalm 71:9,

"Cast me not off in the time of *old age;* forsake me not when my strength faileth." II. Corinthians 12:8, "For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me." An allusion to the "thorn in the flesh" is found in the last quotation.

On pardon: Psalm 79:8, 9, "O remember not against us former iniquities: let thy tender mercies speedily prevent us: for we are brought very low. Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of thy name: and deliver us and purge away our sins, for thy name's sake." Matthew 6:12, "Forgive our debts as we forgive our debtors." Luke 18:13, "God be merciful to me a sinner."

On God's favor: Exodus 33:13, "Show me now thy way, that I may know thee, and find grace in thy sight." Psalm 4:6, "Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us." Psalm 106:4, 5, "Remember me, O Lord, with the favor that thou bearest unto thy people: O visit me with thy

salvation; that I may see the good of thy chosen, that I may rejoice in the gladness of thy nation, that I may glory with thine inheritance."

On the Holy Spirit: Psalm 51:12, "Uphold me with thy free Spirit." Luke 11:13, "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him." Acts 4:31, "When they had prayed, . . . they were all filled with the Holy Spirit."

On temporal and spiritual blessings: Genesis 28:20, 21, "If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the Lord be my God." Romans 1:10, "Making request (if by any means now at length I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God) to come unto you." Psalm 143:10, "Teach me to do thy will; for thou art my God: thy Spirit is good." Philip-

pians 1:9-11, "I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; that ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ; being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God."

On wisdom: Psalm 90:12, "So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom." Ephesians 1:17-19, "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power."

Then, prayer is communing with God. In this there will be an exercis-

ing of every phase of its scope and a growing into Him with whom the heart throbs and holds conversation.

"The communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen."

IV

Quotations and Reflections on Prayer

"If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." John 15:7.

"Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son." John 14:13.

TO LIVE and to grow mean the assimilation of His word and abiding in Him. Thus man develops elements of unlimited efficiency. His life is easy and peaceful, for he touches the Hand, all-powerful and tender in guiding. He breathes air filled with sustenance for his soul. Talking with God becomes intelligent and brings highest joy and ecstasy.

Jesus sought the glory of the Father when on earth in human form. Now, as Intercessor, He lives and acts with this object before Him. The mo-

tive of prayer should be for the Father's glory. The Scriptures warn us as to asking to gain that we may use our gains on our lusts. Murray says: "What a humbling thought that so often there is earnest prayer for a child or a friend, for a work or a circle, in which the thought of our joy or our pleasure was far stronger than any yearnings for God's glory. No wonder that there are so many unanswered prayers; here we have the secret. He who would pray the prayer of faith will have to give himself to live literally so that the Father in all things may be glorified in him."

The verses given above from the Bible assure us that God answers prayer. When the conditions given are lived out, man is quite fully a partner with God. He can make demands, and they will be honored. So prayer means benefit in a larger sense than its mere reflex influence. It puts the soul in command of great resources and places before man incentives to the

highest attainments. Jesus says, "Ask, and it shall be given you."

"Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths" (Proverbs 3:5, 6). This scripture has been verified in many lives. The man who acknowledges Him in all his ways has his steps ordered of the Lord. Blessed experience is mine as to the truth of this statement. "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits." George Müller says, in this relation, "I have still day by day been enabled to wait upon the Lord with reference to enlarging the orphan work, and have been during the whole of this period in perfect peace, which is the result of seeking in this thing only the Lord's honor and the temporal and spiritual benefit of my fellowmen." It is shown, further, that he spent much time in quietly waiting on God, not disclosing his plans to any human being, that he might not be in-

fluenced by what might be said on the subject.

David Gregg, in his book, "Prayer as a Working Force," says: "A grand, bold life will produce grand, bold prayers; a limited life will produce limited prayers. As a rule, religious life registers itself in prayer. Abraham was a massive man, a broad man, and so his prayer was massive and broad. Our prayers broaden or contract our lives, and our lives broaden or contract our prayers." He illustrates this principle by comparing the life of Abraham with that of Lot. Lot's petition was selfish; he had no thought for his kinsmen and former associates. Pray in accord with the will of God and His glory, then your life and sympathies will broaden until you can comprehend all men and conditions in your thought. "Lord, teach us how to pray."

H. Clay Trumbull says: "It is according to the promise of God, and therefore it is in accordance with the

laws of nature, that great wonders can be wrought through prayer. God has so planned His work of creation that right prayer is as potent a force in the universe as the mightiest of mere natural forces. There can be no conflict where God has ordained harmony." In the universe of forces, man has the distinguished possibility of entering in as a kind of supernatural force. To ascend to such a place of command and work must, in the nature of things, in the process of ascent, cause to unfold and grow every potential mental, moral, and spiritual element of man.

Stopford Brooke wrote: "Prayer does not directly take away a trial or its pain, any more than a sense of duty directly takes away the danger of infection, but it preserves the strength of the whole spiritual fiber, so that the trial does not pass into temptation to sin." It is seen in this idea that prayer is a spiritual tonic. Thus man is enabled to gain the mastery without which he is not crowned.

Dr. Joseph Parker said: "The inward man must be renewed day by day; we must deepen the soil if we would enrich the crop. If the Master could not do without lonely prayer, the servant surely cannot." If we are ever to have a fine and influential personality, if we can hope to win spiritual victories, we must be people of much prayer. Paul, who is the way to Christ as Christ is the way to God, has, as the secret of his life, prayerfulness. In his prayers he has given an autobiography. What a strong, cumulative life is his. How his writings fashion men free to think and act Godward. "No other man of the Bible interjected so many prayers into his writings but David."

Rev. R. J. Campbell says: "Prayer is the reinforcement of human endeavor; it is not the substitute for it. Prayer is the enlargement of your personality; prayer is working on power from the unseen—mighty are those who know how to bring it. It is said

that the presence of Napoleon on the field of battle was equivalent to a reinforcement of 40,000 men. Why? Because he so increased the fighting value of every separate man that his mere presence was equivalent to another army. Prayer will do that for you. The man of prayer is the best kind of man. The man who can go to God when he has done his own *best* is drawing what the natural man cannot have. The spiritual man is the man of power, because he is the man of prayer."

"Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name; ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full."

V

Prayer, a Holy Exercise

"Night and day praying exceedingly." I. Thessalonians 3 : 10.

"His delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water." Psalm 1 : 2, 3.

"Exercise thyself unto godliness." I. Timothy 4 : 7.

EXERCISE has an important place in physical culture. The body of man needs this to be healthy and stalwart. The child has need of the sunshine, the playground, various forms of play and work, that the muscles may be brought into activity. This process develops them and gives tenacity to the nerve fiber. Muscular and nervous tissue is sensitive and formative, yet much more is mental and soul tissue susceptive to impressions. Then the mind and soul should have a training that brings

them into touch with the highest thought and life. Thus, "the tissue of the life to be" is formed out of immortal elements. "Unto thee will I cry, O Lord my rock. . . . Hear the voice of my supplications, when I cry unto thee, when I lift up my hands toward thy holy oracle."

Vegetation grows differently under varying conditions. Take the same form of plant life and place it where its labor can be quickened, and see the large, vigorous, and beautiful stalk. The plant has an environment which encourages and uses vegetable exercise. So, many who live in an atmosphere of holy meditation "shall be like a tree planted by rivers of water." How reasonable, then, that the psalmist should sing, "I will cry unto God most high; unto God that performeth all things for me."

Prayer calls for adoration—"Hallowed be thy name." To contemplate "the Giver of every good and perfect gift," means the exercising of the fac-

ulty of appreciation, of gratitude. This faculty is often blunted; it should be acute. Even the ancient Persians thought the ungrateful were negligent toward their parents, fatherland, and gods. Ingratitude received severe punishment at their hands. In this age of high civilization, how great is the need that a training be practiced which will stimulate appreciation, gratitude, and adoration. "Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy."

In holy meditation there is appreciation of Him who is holy, yet there must be a depreciation of self in so much as to appear humbly before the God of all grace. The consciousness of sin and lack of wisdom permeates the entire man in such times. Then it is that he confesses his sin, seeks pardon and guidance. It is in this way that he ceases to do evil and learns to do well. Adoration and confession are exercises unto godliness.

To "pray without ceasing" creates

a holy world for the self-life. Thus this life is transformed into one of holy service, quite free from selfishness. In this way man attains the fervency of the Spirit. Now he thinks of God's kingdom; God's will is precious; an eagerness possesses him to impress the peace and power of this kingdom on all hearts; the beat of the heart more and more accords with the throb of the heart of the King of kings; his life grows in vigor and power. He announces, "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found."

The man who frequents the avenue of prayer walks as a child of light and becomes not weary. Walking in this royal road furnishes many grand visions for his soul. Unto him it is given "to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven." Providences which once seemed dark now become vivid and helpful. Day by day the great principle of acquisition is verified; namely, "Whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance."

He who has the will to use conditions, opportunities, and spiritual privileges shall grow and "go from strength to strength." Then, "Let us lift up our heart *with our hands* unto God in the heavens."

Prayer is a holy exercise because it presupposes doing with might what the hands find to do. To call upon God means that you are working, yet seeking wisdom, added efficiency and light. In this is seen a double stimulus to development, self-activity, and the confidence in God's nurturing. D. L. Moody had unshaken faith in prayer. He practiced it. He spent time in holy communion with the Father of spirits, then he went out to greet and cheer by word and deed his fallen brothers. Thus he grew into the likeness of the Son of God. "In every work that he began in the service of the house of God, . . . he did it with all his heart, and prospered."

When you pray you think Godward. Yes, often you repeat His thought.

Can you count the value of such a process? It is then that the soul gets out into the universe of suggestion, inspiration, and creation. Have you not often read the great authors, the masters of literature, such as Homer, Socrates, Dante, Milton, and Browning? To follow such minds means enrapturing delights. To read them truly brings you in touch with their spirits. How you linger with their superb thoughts, and grow through this exercise in your own soul and personality. But what shall we say of the ecstasy of soul that comes when mind and heart touch the creative soul? Then the delight in the law of the Lord in the inward man cannot be told.

Prayer as a holy exercise demands care in approaching the throne of grace. How often sacrilege is practiced by irreverent and thoughtless calling on God. It is this that often brings God's disfavor on man, and the potent office of prayer in question. "If we have forgotten the name of our God,

. . . shall not God search this out?"

To pray with the spirit and understanding gives assurance of attaining. As Paul wrote, "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect; but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. . . . This one thing, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

"Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer."

VI

A Process of Inspiration and Assimilation

"He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit." I. Corinthians 6:17.

"To be spiritually minded is life and peace." Romans 8:6.

PRAYER is the oxygen of spiritual life. It is the Christian's vital breath. Just as physical life fails without pure air, so spiritual life cannot exist without this holy atmosphere. Constant communion with God the Father creates for the individual this invigorating and inspiring breath of life. As in the beginning God breathed on man and he became a living soul, so yet it is God's vital breath that perpetuates soul-life and soul-growth. Then, the process by which this comes is fundamental and lifeful.

Christ said, "I will pray the Father,

and he shall give you another Comforter, the Spirit of truth, that he may abide with you forever." This is the guide into all truth. It is in the world of truth that men become free and develop that life abundant of which the Savior speaks. The inbreathing of truth, the essence of highest life, gives joy and peace.

"He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit." The way of this union, this affinity, is prayer. A man cannot gain a mind akin to the mind of his fellow unless they two are often together. They must spend much time in conversation. They must think on the same themes, investigate similar problems, live in a kindred atmosphere. Varying conditions produce dissimilar spirits. To look up into the face of one who is good and great in personality is to imbibe something of his splendid character. To walk with another brings about a likeness. When Enoch had assimilated God's character by close personal contact, then God transferred

him into conditions helpful to the growth of that life for which he had prayed and lived.

Stephen's face was aglow as he looked into heaven and saw the glory of God, while the faces about him were darkened with the shadows of sin and satanic companionship. To look heavenward is a holy stimulus. Let this influence become constant, then man is quickened into newness of thought and freeness of sympathetic action. This celestial goal becomes magnetic since the center of its glory is Christ Jesus.

To study the processes of transformation as found in things inanimate often fills one with wonder and admiration. To see carbon changed into the diamond, clay into rubies, and sandstone into granite, is to look upon the multiplication of values. The change is slow, but brought about by a kind of contact under constant laws and conditions. So to change the lower into the higher in man must be accomplished in accord with the prin-

ciple of continuous contact with the higher. In this way there is a transformation of the carnal into the spiritual, a transmuting of the mortal into the immortal. Prayer is the medium of contact so that we may behold the glory of the Lord, and be "changed into *the same image* from glory to glory," as of the Lord the Spirit. How glorious is the way and how hallowed is the privilege which build up lives that manifest the life of Jesus in the body.

Day by day the tree turns into its fiber the soil, sunshine, and shower. Week after week the child assimilates the food, and thus it becomes various kinds of tissue. So moment by moment the man who lives in Christ Jesus takes on His nature. This means a Christ-heart; this means creative thought and unselfish action. God has said, "I will put my law in their inward parts, and *write it in their hearts.*" The very heart is thrilled and permeated with the spirit of His law.

This law is thus impressed and made flesh and life while man communes with the Author. This new creation is encouraged in its growth from the same source, for God said, "I will be as dew unto Israel: he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon." These words indicate the beauty and far-reaching influence of the man who has the inspiration and nurture of Heaven. Therefore, Paul writes, "I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them who are sanctified."

It is in prayer to God that "we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen," and so we become characterized by things that are eternal. As we breathe in His eternal nature and feed upon His creative thought, the corruptible is changed into the incorruptible, and mortality germinates into the immortal. Friend, pray that you may be His friend.

Even though you may not be able to pray as you ought, remember the Spirit makes "intercession for the saints according to the will of God." Thus it is that "intelligent righteousness comes into entire sympathy with the mind of God." You look around and see narrow-minded persons. Why so? They have not been broadened by this living, sympathetic, inspiring fellowship and communion with the Father. Some may wonder at the growing favor of the name and person of Jesus, yet when they study His life, its sources and processes, they will find an explanation. His earth-life was filled with intense and persistent prayer. Hear the scripture, "And it came to pass in those days, that he went into a mountain *to pray,* and continued *all night* in prayer to God." No wonder that such a person's face would "shine as the sun and his raiment be as white as the light" in a moment of transfiguration.

A man's life will be strong and beau-

tiful just in proportion to his walking and talking with God. A stranger comes into your community. You all notice his gentleness and consequent influence. Many admire his potent and charming life. Some think him a favored man having been born with a beautiful and serene temperament. Talk with him. Learn of his tendencies, his struggles, and then of the way of his mastery. He will tell you that this evenness of character came not by intuition, but he learned and grew this life in the training-school of service and prayer with Jesus the Lord.

It is written, "Be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind." Mind renewal may be commenced instantly, but the completion is brought about by growth under proper conditions. To train the mind to think as Socrates thought means to give yourself over in a teachable attitude. Then, as he discusses the great theme of immortality of the soul, your soul will pulsate with new life, since your mind is being

changed like unto his. Now, to have the mind perfected in its renewal, man must be teachable as he meets God in his meditations and prayers. He must persistently ask God to put out certain carnal elements of mind by inculcating His own spiritual elements. Then, at last, man grows up into Christ, having lived under His inspiration and having partaken of His nature. "This is the heritage of the servants of God."

"Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thy health shall spring forth speedily: and thy righteousness shall go before thee."

VII

An Equipment for Christian Service

"Apart from me ye can do nothing." John 15 : 5.

"God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all *sufficiency* in all things may abound to every good work." II. Corinthians 9 : 8.

"Pray ye the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth *laborers* into his harvest." Luke 10 : 2.

"Pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course." II. Thessalonians 3 : 1.

"Saved to serve! the watchword ring,
Saved to serve our glorious King;
Tell the story o'er and o'er,
Saved to serve for evermore."

He serves best who prays most. The lives of epoch-making men confirm this statement. A man of large influence and resources must have a broad life; but this kind of life obtains only in him who knows how God works. Communion with Him elevates the mind as

nothing else can. This gives the universal vision, opens up world possibilities and opportunities. The vision becomes an inspiration and equipment for work. It means much to see how God has wrought. "You can do anything with nature if you know how. God knows how." Talk with Him and learn how to deal with human nature.

Jesus gave the first public instruction to His first disciples in the Sermon on the Mount. In unfolding the laws and principles of His kingdom, He teaches them to pray. The command is, "Pray to your Father." To work successfully in this kingdom means the knowing of the laws. These are revealed through prayer and study. Every man of God who has gained a keen insight into the mysteries of His kingdom has been intense and importunate in prayer. The psalmist says, "O Lord God of my salvation, I have cried day and night before thee."

Prayer was the working force in the Master's life. He undertook no great

work, entered upon no trying ordeal without calling upon the Father. His life's prayer was, "Father, glorify thy name." The voice spoke to Him constantly in His faithful life, "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again." The servant, then, as his Master, will find the way of true service to be by the royal highway of glorifying the Father's name in recognition of His readiness and ability to furnish direction and help to His workmen. So "men ought always to pray, and not to faint."

Jesus teaches that vital union with Him is a requirement for doing real service. Conversation is the medium by which this relationship is kept active. The son may understand his father quite well. He may have worked with him and for him a number of years, yet, if a new work is to be entered upon, he desires a talk with his father; yes, often, in performing the routine tasks of the business, an interchange of words and views adds much

to his efficiency, for then he is *sure* of the father's will. Now, the child of God obtains the Father's will by a conversation in His Son's name and, in this spirit, by reflection upon His Word. Thus potency is given to his work. It bears the marks of the divine, and this gives the service a permanency.

Paul says, "God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having *all sufficiency* in all things, may abound to every good work." He wrote not at random, but under the inspiration of Heaven and his own experience. "His career was shaped under the hand of God, and thus he was prepared for and helped in his life-work." He gained access to this Hand by fellowship in prayer. Doctor Gregg writes: "Paul prayed when entering upon and passing through all the great events of his life. I cannot recall a single exception of any note when he did not pray. He prayed on the day of his conversion.

He prayed on the day of his baptism. He prayed when cast into prison. He was in the temple praying when God came and gave him his great commission as the apostle to the Gentiles. In the spirit of entire dependence upon God he took every step of his career." This last sentence contains a great practical thought; namely, *practicing a life of prayer.* Such a man will have times of formal prayer, but he will often breathe forth an informal prayer.

An author's writings paint in telling colors his soul. Deep, pure thought is the expression of a soul attuned to the Over-Soul, is the utterance of a heart vigorous with Heaven's life-blood. See this in the apostle named in former paragraph. "His epistles were forged in a heavenly atmosphere." "His epistles are all inlaid with prayers. He opens each with a salutation which is a prayer for the peace of God; and he closes every one of them with an autograph benediction which calls down the blessing of divine grace." As

in his day so in ours the Word of God is given free course by means of prayer.

The Christian's work is varied. Its scope is comprehensive. He lives among men and works with and for them, yet he deals with Heaven. Service in Christ's name calls for a great deal of intercession. To intercede successfully means that you have grown until you have attained sympathetic touch with men, and that you have lived the spiritual life until you command the ear of God. Then your equipment for service is sublime and your influence for good unlimited.

Jesus taught His disciples to pray the Lord to send forth workmen. The field invited many then, but more now. O Christian man, to live out this teaching assures more laborers and also makes you more a doer of His will, for you cannot *pray* this prayer unless you are willing to serve in His world-harvest. To serve by deed and prayer unfolds your potential spiritual life until you are numbered among those

who shall do greater works than He, because He has gone to the Father.

"It is in prayer that power for work is obtained." Here a living faith is inspired. Such a faith keeps alive in work. A man of this prayer-life and faith remembers "to do good and to communicate." Thus he grows by doing, and improves by using that which has been committed to him, and his life is kept beautiful and strong by drinking at the Fountain of the fullness of joy. As an illustration of the theme of this chapter, think also of such men as Martin Luther, John Knox, Charles Finney, George Müller, Hudson Taylor, and D. L. Moody.

"Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive."

VIII

Spiritual Life

"He that hath the Son hath life." I. John 5 : 12.

"I came that they may have life, and may have it abundantly." John 10 : 10.

"Abide in me." John 15 : 4.

"They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength." Isaiah 40 : 31.

"Great Sculptor, hew and polish us, nor let,
Hidden and lost, Thy form within us lie!
Complete Thy purpose, that we may become
Thy perfect image—Thou our God and Lord."

LIFE in all of its manifestations is profound. No other theme is so laden with interest and inspiration. However, here the student enters the world of deepest mystery. Frequently he must stand still and exclaim, "My Lord and my God!" for, without the tuition of God and the leadership of the Spirit, the sublimity of the mystery stupefies. The Spirit is the only com-

petent guide to the mind of man as he approaches and enters the world of life.

Physical life affords abundant work for the natural scientist. He deals with the concrete and tries to see even that which makes lifeful the atoms of dust. At times he has thought to be about ready to make an announcement of his analysis of the life-producing essence, then he faltered. The best he can do is to recognize that "all life is from life." The phenomena and forces of nature furnish him ample fields of investigation. It is well for him to discern that

"The smallest dust which floats upon the wind
Bears the strong impress of the eternal mind."

The forces of nature are strong and grand. The lower forms of life present matter vivified; but how forces and life multiply and intensify as we approach the borderland between the temporal and eternal, between things material and essences spiritual.

"To matter or to force
The all is not confined;
Beside the law of things
Is set the law of mind."

In the process of our study, mental life offers itself for consideration. How replete is this theme with thought and golden lessons. A spell of awe comes over the student as he makes the mind his object of investigation; as he turns his thought to the powers of his own mind. The vigor and possibilities of mental life charm him. With profound interest he looks into the laws of mind growth and culture. By studying these processes he becomes yet keener in intellect until he may follow out very abstruse lines of thought.

Man should know himself mentally. This gives him a mastery. He thus gains a great attainment and fits himself for splendid service. In this way, at least, he develops a mental personality. Therefore, he will be a leader of men of mind. Being in this a benefactor, a delight will flow into his life.

Yet, with all the gradations of life and charms, there is fullness of life and joy only to him who has been made a new creature in Christ Jesus.

Spiritual life is the highest life. Having this life begotten, one is in the great universe of spiritual thought and activity. These lower forms of life are given to man as more concrete to lead, as by the inductive method, into the higher and the highest life. This earthly, human life is a training-school. Hence, fittingly, Ella Wheeler Wilcox sings, "I have learned how *to pray,* and toil, and save."

The life of the Spirit is begun and nurtured by conformity to the will of God. To have the Son is to accord with God's will; and "he that hath the Son hath life." Drummond wrote, "The supreme principle of life is to adhere to the will of God." In this way, spiritual life is begotten, and this is the end of all life. To know His will implies intercourse with Him. So prayer is at the foundation of this re-

newed image and permeates the structure. Finding God is a certain result of prayer. He who finds God has the Son, hence has life.

Jesus, the Son, teaches that the purpose of His coming was that this highest life might be abundant, might be an overflowing life. Streams of quickening and peace are to flow out from our lives. Intercessions must be made to have this result. This is faith's training-school. "He who begins to pray will find the spirit of faith is given nowhere so surely as at the foot of the Throne." The cure of a feeble faith will invigorate our whole spiritual life.

The philosophy of the spiritual life is found in His own sentence, "Abide in me." This means a constant crying to Him, "Create in me a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within me." Moment by moment, thus, every thought and deed helps to produce the man whose words and meditations are acceptable in the sight of the Lord. To

abide in Him implies obedience. This is the doing of His will which brings the knowledge of His doctrine; but the words that He speaks are spirit and life, so this knowledge is an assimilation of spirit and life.

The unconscious influence of this life is one of the dearest rewards. You are a life-dispenser many times without knowing it. As the electric wave carries messages without a perceptible medium of communication, so the Spirit-filled life conveys the message of joy and salvation to many; but this current of life cannot flow out from the soul unless that soul "waits upon the Lord." The Lord must be the strength of his life.

Jesus said, "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the *light of life.*" To be children of light, then, is to dispel darkness in hearts, in homes, in heathendom. As muscular power and mental life enervate without proper use, so spiritual life wanes

unless in touch with Christ and in use. So, then, "*Walk* as children of light."

O Lord, in Thy Son's name, we pray that a "new heart and a new spirit" may be created in us, that our lives may not be conformed to the world, but that they may be transformed by the "washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit." O Lord, our life and our strength, then so help us to walk, that the world may know that "whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is *born of God.*"

"The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God."

IX

Growth of Spiritual Life

"First the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear." Mark 4:28.

"Your life is hid with Christ in God." Colossians 3:3.

"Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit." Ephesians 6:18.

THE highest type of life is spiritual. Just as this kind of life is not spontaneous or self-productive in its origin, neither is it self-sustaining. "Of his own will begot he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures" (James 1:18). "Being born again, . . . by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever" (I. Peter 1:23). Spiritual life thus being begotten is nourished by means of prayer and the assimilation of His word. "Praying always in the Spirit" creates holy desires and aspira-

tions. Then it is that man "desires the sincere milk of the Word, that he may *grow* thereby."

Vegetable growth furnishes a splendid illustration of the spiritual. Jesus said, "The kingdom of God is as if a man should cast seed into the ground; and should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how." The process of vegetable germination and growth, man does not fully understand. However, he knows by subjecting the seed to certain conditions there becomes life and growth. So the kingdom of God, which is within man, comes not with observation, yet unfolds, as the corn, when proper conditions are met.

Meeting the conditions of soul-growth might be comprehended in the expression *spiritual education.* This kind of education demands one's best thought and intensest study. "Study to show thyself approved unto God." Man must be given to constant search-

ing out of the relations between him and his Creator. As he investigates these and discovers again and again how close God has planned that he should be to Himself, and how intimate He would have man to be with Him, then he breathes a celestial air which gives new vigor and unfolding to his spiritual nature; then the dews of heaven water his soul. New visions of ecstacy and fullness of joy possess his soul. His appetite and desires are purified so that he cries out, "How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!" "More to be desired are they than gold." What an attainment man has made, especially in this time when he desires God's word *more than gold.* Unlimited are the opportunities and possibilities of such a soul. This process of education means that the spirit-life is nurtured by contact with the Spirit of God our Father. In this union, day by day, there is less concern for the material and perishable, but

greater value attached to the immaterial and imperishable.

Following out this education by which comes spiritual growth, implies having regard to the instinctive tendencies of the soul. So when the soul longs to wait upon God and to hold conversation with Him, this longing must be satisfied. When the soul hungers and thirsts after righteousness, then the life is directed in conformity with the principles of right living. The growing soul will often cry out:

> "But I need, now as then,
> Thee, God, who moldest men."

That is, with higher degrees of spiritual life, one will not feel sufficient, but he will feel a need of his Father and Friend, also a growing assurance of His help. Occasions will occur to use the strength attained. Emergencies put man to the test and teach him how to use so as to grow. Thus, moment by moment, depending on the "precious promises," he becomes a *"partaker of the divine nature."*

The blade, then the mature ear, grow under the tuition of soil, sunshine, shower, and the husbandman. Cultivation must be carried on, else growth soon ends and decay begins. Prayer is to the soul born anew as the fertile soil, warmth, and moisture are to the corn. These conditions of growth are made and kept active by him who would grow. As he gives himself over to the holy life of communion, how he breathes in the sunshine and shower of the grace of God. This grace is sufficient, and by it man goes from strength to strength. It is written, "When they had prayed, they were all filled with the Holy Spirit." The Holy Spirit guides into truth and equips for service. To be directed into the truth is to be led into the Christ, thus the life is hid with Him in God. But to be in Him is to be free. If the Son, therefore, make you free, you are free *in nature*. This is the highest condition of infinite evolution. The Holy Spirit also equips for service. Work

is a process of growth. He who serves not cannot increase his spiritual stature. The man of faith and the Holy Ghost has special fields of duty and privilege, *because of these,* added inspiration. Think of Stephen. "They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Ghost. . . . And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake." So, by prayer, the Spirit leads, enriches, and develops.

When Jesus was telling the people the way to get whatsoever they would, He gave a fundamental requisite of growth. He said, "If my words abide in you." Andrew Murray says: " 'His words abiding' are the equivalent of 'Himself abiding.' What a view is here opened up to us of the place the words of God in Christ are to have in our spiritual life, and especially in our prayer. In a man's words he reveals himself; but when God, the Infinite Being, in whom everything is life and power, spirit and truth, in the very

deepest meaning of the words,—when God speaks forth Himself in His words, He does, indeed, give Himself, His love, and His life, His will, and His power, to those receiving those words, in a reality passing comprehension." And so, for the words He speaks are spirit and life. Then meditative and prayerful study of His Word is as essential to the growth of the soul as mastication, digestion, and assimilation of food are needful for the growth of the body. "I commend you to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up."

"Hid with Christ in God" expresses the condition of the life that grows and becomes like Him. Living such a life, your desires and practices emanate from Christ. Such an environment *keeps* you. Doctor Gregg writes: "This lifts us in our spirit into the heavenlies. This makes God Himself our atmosphere, and we carry our atmosphere with us wherever we go. This atmosphere is a proof against all infection, and to breathe it is *constant*

health. This makes a robust soul, and a robust soul is safe anywhere and everywhere. This makes us as safe as God Himself. This clothes us in white, down here on earth, and also keeps our robes unspotted from the world. This makes us independent of environment. The man whose life is hid with Christ in God makes his own environment. My point is that if we who are Christians are to be what we would like to be, we must coöperate with God in nurturing and fostering this hidden life and in making it our all and in all while here in this world."

Our Father and our Life, we would abide in Thee. Help Thou us, that we may search Thy Word and allow it to abide in us. Our Father and our God, help us to walk with Thee that we may obtain the life-giving and life-nurturing knowledge; for Thy Son said, "This is life eternal, that they might *know Thee* the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." We pray that we may also be in Him, that

we may be made perfect in one, "that the world may know that thou hast sent him." Amen.

"We kneel, *how weak!* We rise, how full of prayer!
Why, therefore, should we do ourselves this wrong,
Or others—that we are not always strong;
That we are ever overborne with care;
That we should ever weak or heartless be,
Anxious or troubled, *when with us is prayer*,—
And joy, and strength, and courage, are with Thee?"

X

Fellowship with the Triune God

"Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and his Son Jesus Christ." I. John 1 : 3.

"God is faithful, by whom ye were called into the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord." I. Corinthians 1 : 9.

"He shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever." John 14 : 16.

THE reader has seen that spiritual life and growth *become* when there is vital union with God through His Son by the medium of prayer, which results in "the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Spirit." It is in this new relation that man begins to walk and talk with God. You will all remember that when you were first introduced to a great man your conversation was guarded, was not intimate or free. After spending days or weeks with him, you knew his mind so much better that you were much more

at home in his presence. Man in his unregenerate state is an alien as to God. When he is naturalized into His kingdom and made one of His household, then new principles and conditions obtain. He has been having fellowship with darkness; now he walks in the light, since God is light. He is to learn new units of thought and to use a new language. This attainment must come by a close acquaintance with the triune God. "Acquaint now thyself with him and be at peace."

Some of you have had the privilege of spending a number of years in close relationship with eminent scholars and teachers. These will call to mind the pleasure and profit that come to them in hours of closest communion. A special theme presented itself to the master mind, and his personality, all aglow with the truth of the subject, led his pupils into new worlds gleaming with gems of truth. You will all recall your walks through verdant meadows, over variegated landscapes, by dazzling

waterfalls, yet your emotions of joy were not so full or uplifting as is the delight of pupils as they walk with their master into worlds superb with truth and here talk with him. How the mind develops under such an inspiration! Visions of the possible life open up. In such an atmosphere men grow creative intellects. They offer the world benefactions more enduring than gold or precious stones. They are philanthropists, for they crystallize thought vital with truth, and bequeath it to future generations.

How many of you will now think of the hours of quietude you have spent with a lifetime friend? Often you sat together, neither uttering a word, yet the one communing with the other. The vital thought sometimes interflowed unconsciously. Then you will recall the days of trouble and affliction, when perplexing problems came to you. Now you remember the new courage and purpose which became yours as you walked, and talked these matters

over. Despondency would have overshadowed you but for this intercommunion. Just as "Jonathan arose, and went to David, and strengthened his hand in God," so you were encouraged in these untoward conditions. The blessings that result from the companionship of true friendship are incalculable. This brings rest of mind and heart, therefore strong and pure thought is a constant companion. A man with such a character engages in vigorous, aggressive work. He creates an atmosphere of confidence. He teaches men to so live that they can be trusted.

When human fellowship is so full of instruction and comfort, what must be the lessons, cheer, courage, and life that come to us when we are vitally associated with the triune God? It seems to me time will be too short to discover all these benefits. We shall need eternity to appreciate fully this blessed relation, yet it is ours to know in part, even here, "the fellowship of the mys-

tery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God."

John says of regenerate man, "Truly his fellowship is with the Father and his Son." The term used here is κοινωνία which means fellowship, association, community, communion, joint participation, and intercourse. These all indicate the rich bond between the child of God and his Father. The child, when small, delights to have its father's attention. When it is able to walk, then there is real joy in walking out with him. So various phases of association are practiced as the growth continues to maturity. This offers an illustration of the spirit-life in its relation to God.

To have God, our Heavenly Father, as constant companion gives assurance and efficiency; but we are also called into the fellowship of His Son. How very real the help becomes when we are conscious of this relation, for we know that our partnership is with Him who has met and won in the business of hu-

man life. The art of living interests us because our Teacher in this is preëminent in knowledge. Who can estimate the value of association with the Man tried in all things as we are, yet without sin, without failure? Then, fellowship with God and His Son, the Christ, offers an inspiration that tongue cannot tell, but human heart may experience. Under such tuition the human soul will grow into the likeness of God. This companionship means having a Teacher who knows the universe of truth, for He Himself is the truth. He can open up to the soul's vision and enjoyment nuggets of golden truth; and since the soul of man has an affinity for truth, in this condition it assimilates the truth and unfolds in beauty and power. This companionship assures the Helper in times of affliction and need. When in tribulations, one would tremble as the deer before its pursuers, if He were not near as covert and refuge. So, then, "fellowship, according to John's teaching,

consists in the fact that Christians are partakers in common of the same mind as God and Christ, and of the blessings arising therefrom."

But communion with the triune God also assures intercourse with the Spirit. Jesus said, "He shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever." As intercommunion of human spirits strengthens them, so the abiding contact of the infinite Spirit confirms, inspires, uplifts, glorifies. The Spirit's presence breathes in man a message of comfort, in hours of heartaches, such as can be gained from no other presence. The Son's, "I will not leave you comfortless," has its realization in the Spirit's ministry of compassion and love. This fellowship of love is equally eminent in each person of the Three-One God. Murray writes, "Of the deep mystery of the fellowship of love in which the Three-One has His blessedness, *prayer is the earthly image and likeness.*" Prayer, then, is a kind of concrete ex-

pression of this unseen and intimate relation. This is exercising one's self in His presence. It is the medium of abiding and living in God. It is written of the early believers, "They continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship and in prayer." This emphasizes the process of keeping up the union of saints with God.

You may recall a time when you longed for the presence of your father and mother. It was after your leaving the parental roof to form a home of your own. Many miles were between you and your old home, with its associations. A time of sorrow came, when the strength of father's arm would have lifted you above the grief, or mother's tender hand would have wiped away the tears. Thus separated, the spirit of sympathetic communion gave you help and was comforting. Your heart talked with parental heart. "No man need be without comfort while the gates of prayer are open to him. He who enters within these gates can have

comfort in all things and always. God has comfort for him in his every hour of need. No human friend can get so near to us as God. No man can know what real comfort is if he refrains from prayerful communion with the God of all comfort."

The Scripture adds to the expression, "His Son Jesus Christ," the title, "Our Lord." "This invests the Christian communion with present grandeur and certifies its hope of glory." Fellowship with His Son, the Lord—what sublimity and cheer in the thought! what joy, what ecstacy, what life in the fellowship! Ear hath not heard tones so seraphic as those produced under such conditions. The soul's ear may hear these. Eye hath not seen a clime so elysian as this, yet the soul's vision may penetrate its grandeurs. This partnership makes the heart of man exuberant in its fullness of life *because there is here a certification of the hope of glory.* As in holy intercourse in this relationship the soul

looks up to God, "the light of his countenance" permeates, purifies, and keeps pure and growing the soul.

O Lord, when we consider Thy majesty and wisdom, we discern how poor and needy we are. Our gratitude is inexpressible when we consider the exalted privilege Thou hast conferred upon us, Thy creatures. Thou hast greatly honored and enriched us in that Thou dost call us into fellowship with Thyself and Thy Son. O Lord, our Father, help us to walk and talk with Thee, that our lives may express the dignity, the peace, the power of persons so highly favored. Help us to maintain the holy partnership inviolate in all of our relations in life. Grant us to live with a consciousness, moment by moment, of Thy nearness and sympathy. Amen.

"Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God."

XI

Transfiguration

"Jesus was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light." Matthew 17:1, 2.

"We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed [metamorphosed, transformed, transfigured] into the same image." II. Corinthians 3:18.

"The energized prayer of a righteous man is very serviceable or potent." James 5:16 (literal).

IN the preceding pages, we have seen man's dignity in creation and in privilege. Man made in the image of God and invited to walk and talk with his Creator presents a grand state and condition, also offers an opportunity for the highest life. This exalted privilege of intercourse and fellowship is proffered him, notwithstanding the loss of his first estate by disobedience, for "one greater Man restores him." To regain the original image is the

process of life and the way to heaven. This is a light and living way becoming brighter even unto the perfect day. He who walks it is effulgent because of his living contact with the Light.

The term used in making mention of Christ's transfiguration is suggestive of many processes in lower nature. It is the word "metamorphosis." Students of geology, zoölogy, and botany find this term very interesting in relation to these studies. The product that results from this process in all of these realms is more beautiful and valuable. Among the rocks, limestone becomes marble, sandstone becomes granite, and impurities are often crystallized into various minerals. As to creeping and flying things, the unsightly worm is transformed into the beautiful butterfly. So, also, in the botanical world, the parts of the attractive flower are but transformed leaves. What lessons God has written in these substances! How the devout student grows into His way of thinking and doing by follow-

ing out His methods. The transformations named above require time and contact with given conditions. To illustrate: The rock to be changed is subjected to heat, moisture, and pressure. Thus the appearance and texture are changed.

Now, transfigured man is man at his best. He never attains this character unless he meets the transfiguring agents, as did his model, the Christ. He "increased in wisdom." He "waxed strong in spirit, and the grace of God was upon him." He who would perfect the cup as God has planned "must grow up into him in all things, who is the head, even Christ." He says, "I have given you an example." This example will lead us all continually through the avenue of prayer. This was "the working power of His life, the necessity of His being." Prayer was the medium by which He revealed Himself to His disciples. So, then, to have His life means that we will use His methods. In this way we shall in-

crease in wisdom; yes, that which is lower and mortal shall be transmuted into the higher and the immortal, just as in rocks impurities are often changed into useful minerals.

The most brilliant, cheering, and inspiring scene in the earthly life of our Savior was that of His transfiguration on Mount Hermon. This was not the result of a moment, but the manifestation of the accumulated elements of His character as formed by the process of years under Heaven's tuition and discipline. A man appears in the senate chamber. A question of international importance is introduced. He makes a speech which stirs to proper action all members of the assembly. Was this a spontaneous production? No. For years, by study and life, he prepared for this occasion. Not that he knew this opportunity would come, but he knew life to be real and earnest. He lived to be ready for emergencies. So Christ's superb revelation of Himself to Peter, James, and John was the

showing of His real nature to eyes trained to see by close intercourse with Him. Doctor Gregg writes: "As he prayed He was transfigured before them, and they saw the flash of the glory of His Deity. His transfiguration was the result of prayer. He prayed it into existence and it bore witness to His Deity."

To us is offered this glorious way and its result, the transfigured life. This means that we take delight in looking up into His face that His radiance may be written on our faces; that His mind may be in us. "You cannot look Him in the face without catching something of His brightness." When Moses returned from the Mount his face shone. To commune thus gives to our actions the uplifting, healing touch of the Father and His Son. He who says prayers, and is not being transformed into a man given to gentle, *compassionate* ministrations, *has not learned how to pray.* To talk with God through the Son means to live His life.

"This clothes man with a new influence and makes him an abiding benediction. It results in a complete transformation and in a glorious transfiguration."

James' utterance is so full of meaning when he says, "The energized or working prayer," yet a man not "renewed in knowledge after the image of him who created him" might engage in working out the thought of a petition; and so, James adds, "Of a just or righteous man." So then, when one has the spiritual life begotten and matures it on "the bread of heaven," his prayer is very potent in transfiguring, not only himself, but others, until they and he "are changed into the same image." If we fail to pray this kind of prayer, we cannot grow up into Him.

Jesus, the Teacher and Preacher, in His matchless sermon, says, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father who is in heaven is perfect." When we have this ideal, goal, before us, our prayers and lives are given a special incentive. We are led more and more to

practice the process that makes us to live for Him. "Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, *that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body.*"

"'T is to my Savior I would live,
To Him, who for my ransom died;
Nor could all worldly honor give
Such bliss as crowns me at His side."

Our Father and Friend, we thank Thee for Thy Son and the Holy Spirit whom He promised at His translation. We praise Thee because of this omnipresent Guide who leads into all truth, who helps to develop souls whose elements are truth, for "great truths are portions of the soul of man." We thank Thee that "whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and *that wicked one toucheth him not.*" We pray that Thou wilt so teach us and lead us that we may not tarnish the image of Thyself by any contact with evil. O Lord, our Light and our Redeemer, grant us to walk as in "the

light of Thy countenance," "until we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, *unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.*" Amen.

"The Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to discern the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye may be filled with all the fulness of God."

"Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen."

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